

[ARCHERS]

[P.179-A] ADOLESCENCE

858 Only when children approach the age of
593 puberty does the very close family solidarity
begin to weaken. Girls fall more under the influ-
ence of their mothers; boys, under that of their
lineage. At this age also, the sexes are segre-
gated for the first time. Young boys of different
families cease following their mothers and
sisters and group themselves to organize hunts
for rats, mice, and other small slow game in the
neighborhood of the camp. Tree climbing is also
a favorite sport among the boys. But while the
boys become more alienated from their mothers,
the young girls continue to be as closely at-
tached to them as ever, though, like the boys,
they tend to group together with others of the
[86] same age (and older). During this period there
is no formal training (Schebesta, 1948, 415 ff.),
but boys and girls alike learn all there is to be
learned by simple emulation and by assisting
their parents and elders in various tasks.

882 At puberty the boys break completely away
883 from their mothers who have no more to do
with them, writes Schebesta (1948, 424), than
cook their meals. The adolescent girls develop
their flirtatious ways, the boys develop their
ability as hunters, and thus both prepare them-
selves for married life.

PLATE 31²₄

MANUFACTURE OF BARKCLOTH, STRIPPING,
EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

- 516
287 Barkcloth manufacture is predominantly the work of youths or young hunters. The
412 first step, after the strip of bark is cut from a vine, is the stripping of the outer bark. Here a
• 883 youth uses his leg as a platform for support and works with a village-made machete. In the
177 absence of a metal blade, it is said by the Mbuti that they use slivers of bamboo or sharp
stones as knives.

1, /Plate 31 appears on page 295--Analyst/
A

[P.294]

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

142
302
227
412
883
516
177



[P 295]

/Plate 31/
/Caption appears on p. 294/

THE BAND

113

bers of each age level may be *apua'i* to each other doubly underlines 561
the importance of this age grouping as a structural principle of their 601
society, because it not only effectively allies members of the same
age group, but it cuts across any unilineal descent pattern. Even
though, if pressed, any one *apua'i* can and will trace his relationship
to almost any other, through either cognatic or affinal lines, among
themselves this is never done. The functions of the age group, also,
have little to do with kinship.

The age group forms the next unit above the nuclear family, each 561
having its own functions and its own sphere of authority. Above the 621
age group one might consider the band to be divided into alliances 857
of age groups, though their function would be less easy to define. 883
However, such alliances do take place, generally in major disputes,
where youths and children might ally against hunters and elders. Char- [192]
acteristically, disputes concerning premarital sexual activity, betrothal [578]
and *bopi* (playground) activity are the major occasions for such al-
liances. But the same element may be seen at work during the reli- [765]
gious *molimo* festival, where the group of adult men that sing around
a fire at night may divide the hearth into two or three fires. The un-
married youths nearly always have one fire for themselves around
which they dance their erotic dances; the hunters (the younger mar-
ried men) may have a fire of their own, or they may join the *mangesé*,
the elders, men who are no longer as active in the hunt as they used
to be.

Young married couples are held responsible for reproduction, but 621
only to a limited extent for the rearing and education of their chil- 594
dren, for beyond the age of three or four a child becomes the responsi- 561
bility of the band as a whole. As an economic unit the family is 855
divided into the appropriate age groups as a co-operative part of the
total band. Effectively much of its economic activity is directly for its
own individual benefit, but there is nearly always some sharing even
when there is no necessity for sharing, to emphasize the communal
rights to forest produce. As a political unit the family only has in-
ternal jurisdiction of the most minimal kind. The punishment of a
wife or a child, or the complaint of a child about its parents, quickly
becomes a matter for communal discussion. As a religious unit the
family is of little significance indeed. But every nuclear family is ex-
pected to participate in religious festivals, as symbolized when the
molimo hearth is made up by taking embers from every family hearth,
and when a camp is moved each family carefully takes an ember from

594 its own hearth to kindle its own fire in the new camp. The responsi-
621 bility of members of a nuclear family in times of crisis, such as birth, puberty, marriage and death, does not differ much from the responsibility of the band as a whole, the difference being one of degree or intensity.

561 The age group functions as a major institution of education, in-
86 structing the group junior to it in its ways, preparing it for advance to the next, their own, level. Thus the care and education of children rests largely with youths and the oldest of the elders. Youths and hunters depend on each other in the joint hunting and gathering activities, the youths learning from their mothers and fathers all they will soon need to know as hunters themselves. Hunters gradually associate more and more with the *mangesé* (literally, "the great ones") around the evening fires, to listen to the talk of the elders and, in time, to participate.

561 As an economic unit the age group is of supreme importance. Chil-
857 dren scavenge and help supply their own needs through fishing, trap-
• 883 ping, snaring and any other forms of collecting or hunting within
[476] their means. In this they may at times be helped by the youths. The youths are of vital importance to the hunt, the girls acting as beaters with their mothers, and also collecting, while the boys stand guard at the extremities of the circle of nets, having assisted in setting up the nets. Youths may also be expected to perform a number of chores such as fetching wood and water into the camp. The hunters are the prime unit responsible for the sustenance of the band; the *mangesé* are absolved from such responsibilities and may expect to be fed, housed and clothed by the younger age groups.

561 Politically each age group has informal jurisdiction over its mem-
626 bers, utilizing ridicule and ostracism, sometimes driving a member
627 to seek acceptance in the lower age level, or justification by the upper. For a lower age level to ridicule or ostracize a member of a higher level is a supreme condemnation and a most powerful sanction. Further, it will be seen that part of the *molimo* festival is a morning tour of the camp by the youths, carrying the *molimo* trumpet and disguised by leaves and branches, at which time they single out the hut of any troublemaker, however young or old, and threaten to tear it to pieces. Even if there is no such troublemaker, the youths will go from hut to hut stripping a few leaves off the roof of each, causing other minor damage, simply representing the accepted principle of authority, of law and order.

857
868
[883] them. Youths join the older children at this game, but never in a supervisory capacity.

883
561
868
882 Youths may also join the children on their swings in the *bopi*, and will almost certainly build their swings for them, climbing high up into adjacent trees to drape a long liana between them. They then teach the younger children the wild somersaulting games on these swings that are particularly characteristic of the honey season. On the other side the youths equally often join the hunters but, again, always as a separate group, sometimes participating fully, but still as youths. And as youths they continue the process already begun in childhood, of growing more away from their nuclear families and together as an age group. Their hunting and scavenging abilities are greater, and they sometimes even maintain a self-sufficient food economy. As youths they are allowed to stay up at night, instead of retiring with their mothers, and they build their own fire near the hunters' fire and cook their own food and sing and dance, sometimes with the hunters and elders, sometimes separately.

882 As youths they are also given increasing responsibility, especially in the economic life of the band. They may listen to the discussions of the hunters and elders, but even if they make comments, as they do, they are not readily listened to unless it is a matter pertaining to their age group. Then they are required to be able to voice their opinions and cite precedents. They are expected to show an adult sense of responsibility in matters concerning sex and marriage, and although [232] [236] they may flirt quite openly and even audaciously, they never "play house," and not until after the *elima* will a girl again show her favor [584] by cooking for a boy. Then it is tantamount to an admission of betrothal.

224
884
885
561
[422]
[581] After marriage a boy acquires a net. It may be made for him by his mother, or his father may give him part of his net to which he will add, with his wife's help. He has already demonstrated his hunting prowess or he would not be married, but now he is a full hunter with additional responsibilities. Whereas economic activity is shared between the hunters and youths, it is the hunters who ultimately make the decisions concerning camp life, and about the hunt. Where to go for the daily hunt, when to move camp, to what region, how to deal with threats of physical danger, and how to surmount physical problems; such are the questions the hunter has to face. They all concern the band as a whole. Nonphysical dangers and problems—that is to say, moral, psychological and spiritual issues, those that affect the

561
[433] although once again the general pattern in no way implies an invariable rule.

[854] Infants sometimes accompany their mother on her activities, or are left in camp in the charge of youths or elders of either sex.

561
857 Children who do not stay in the *bopi* to play or to imitate adult activities accompany their parents according to sex; however, boys who cannot do much more than walk will, on the hunt, be more likely to accompany their mother. Children up to the age of puberty frequently prepare meals for themselves, not only in the process of "playing house" but also when together as a group. They go together to the streams to fish or crab, to the forest to gather and maybe to hunt for small or slow game, and together they cook and eat these foods. Older children may also co-operate in building a bachelor hut, though more often they will occupy one that has been abandoned, if they want one at all. But even before puberty they are beginning to help on the hunt, the girls with the beating and the boys with guarding the extremities of the nets.

561
• 883 After puberty the activities of youths are temporarily closer to those of their parents, causing some friction and disaffection, particularly between fathers and sons. The sibling groups, however, are reunited; youths now have activities and responsibilities comparable to those of their older married brothers and sisters. It is the younger married couples and the older youths who are primarily responsible for hunting and gathering, not only for food but also for the other material necessities of life, such as saplings and leaves for the huts, bark for clothing, wood for the fires. It is also this age group that manufactures, without any other form of specialization, the entire limited range of artifacts that constitutes Mbuti material culture.

561
889 The older couples, widows and widowers, retire with regret but
589 without shame or stigma from communal life, and to the end they
will act in divers useful ways, in particular looking after children left in the camp while the rest of the band is off on the hunt. Older people
[213] also spend a great deal of their time making the twine used in hunting nets, plaiting vine belts and preparing food. They can expect to be fed by the rest of the band, regardless of its kinship composition, and at the same time they are free to undertake whatever individual hunting and gathering they can. The sick or crippled enjoy similar status, being also unable to keep up with the rigors of the hunt. That such people are regarded as a potential danger to society is seen in the legends of old and crippled people who die or who disappear or who

GOVERNMENT: INTERNAL

197

gone there would have been enough beaters. As usual the women were loud in their complaint, and two of the hunters who had stayed behind with their nets now joined the side of Pepei and said that they had not gone because the women made so much noise, all the game was scared away and the hunt would have been empty anyway. Even Cephu had meat (a highly dramatic statement, for Cephu was usually meatless, or considered so), and the neighboring Lesé pygmies had meat, and everyone knew what poor hunters they were. But we were all starving because everyone was lazy. 224
461
626
578

The discussion went on for about an hour, it being made an excuse to raise all manner of minor sources of discontent. The hunt did not go off again, but in the afternoon there was a big hunting dance, and the next day the women made a special show of setting out, carrying their husbands' nets and spears, at least until they were out of the camp. [585]
[482]

9. While many of the disputes concerning food arise out of general shortage or dissatisfaction, usually owing to poor hunting, and are made occasion for bringing up almost any topic, they are more often made occasion for criticizing specific groups. Thus children will find themselves criticized for making too much noise in their playground, or for splashing too loudly in the stream and so frightening the game away. Youths are accused of idling and playing with girls on the fringes of the hunt instead of guarding the edges against escaping game. Women are blamed for being lazy or inefficient as beaters, men for relying too much on women "who have other work to do." Elders are blamed for not keeping the camp quiet while the hunt is away, and always the whole camp is blamed for causing poor hunting by not singing and dancing properly. 578
[261]
[357]
[383] •

There are innumerable petty squabbles over division of food, but these are always settled by those concerned. Never once have I seen such a squabble become an affair for the whole band to discuss. The only cases of disputes concerning food that have centered around specific individuals, and have not been mere expressions of marital disharmony, have concerned hunting "crimes." These are few and far between, and rather than accuse someone of being a poor hunter it is more often just pointed out that his net is always empty. There was one occasion, however, on which Cephu set his net up inside the hunting circle, therefore in a better position to catch the game being driven in by the beaters. A full description of this is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961, Chapter 5). Its essentials are as follows: 626
578
224

GOVERNMENT: INTERNAL

205

time. They sleep together every night. Why do they not make up their minds and get married? Then Madyadya can have Appiamomba's sister for wife and there will be no more noise."

The next day the issue was taken up by the elders, who gathered together and called on Appiamomba and Mebapepé to say what they wanted. The question of relationship was quickly dismissed by Tungana saying that nobody knew whether Kayo and Ebundu were brothers or not; who was alive to know, so what did it matter? It was "completely far away." The only question remaining was one of intent, and all the elders agreed that the children had been troubling their parents and spoiling the hunt with their noise, and that they must make up their minds and either get married or stop playing around. Appiamomba seemed unsure and said he would ask Mebapepé in his own time. Mebapepé, under pressure, denied that she loved Appiamomba and said she did not want to marry him at all, or indeed have anything else to do with him. She burst into tears and ran to a friend's house.

This relieved the tension somewhat, but Tungana brought up the fact that there were far too many young people around who should be married, and he started naming them. Each in turn began to state his case, but various jealousies quickly came to the surface, and fighting broke out among the youths and their girl friends. Tungana and Moké shrugged their shoulders and retired to their huts, sitting outside and watching with interest. The parents mostly left the scene completely, Manyalibo loudly complaining that the noise would kill him completely. Ekianga remained and tried to restore order, but quickly became involved himself. He shouted for Kengé to get a stick and beat some of the youths away. Kengé shouted back, "Later," and ran to join the other uninvolved youths on a hillock, to get a better view.

By evening the fight had ended, and everyone was too exhausted to renew any discussion. Moké and Tungana suggested it might be good to break camp and go and visit the village for a few days. Kengé said he thought this was an excellent idea, for then all the girls could sleep with the village men and that would keep them quiet for a time. He diverted the conversation to a discussion of village sex techniques, and the camp quickly regained its good humor. The next day half the band left for the village, the rest going further off into the forest. Without exception, the five young couples in question were divided by this move, though nobody referred to the fact.

17. A recently married Mbuti girl, while in the village, slept with a

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.276-G]



142
302
291
883
224

34. A youth, recently initiated, is still considered far from manhood in the forest. Here he helps an older brother set up the net.

1881
1885
593

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO The children were running about in the semi-darkness, laughing and playing, without a care in the world; only a few of the older children, eleven or twelve years of age, helped their parents. The older girls carried an extra basket bulging with plantation foods, or else they carried a baby brother or sister on one hip, bending their heads every now and again to reassure their charge with a kiss full of the warm affection of children. Some of the older boys carried their fathers' hunting nets, proudly, leaving the more experienced hunters free to set off in pursuit of any game they might come across on the way.

Fires blazed in front of all the huts, and those who had not already eaten were quickly swallowing what they could before setting off. Two of Ekianga's wives, Arobanai and Loku, were already helping each other, the one supporting the basket on the other's back while the tump line around the forehead was tested for comfort and strength. In the forest, people cannot carry loads on their heads as they do in open country, because of overhanging branches and the frequent obstacles that have to be climbed over or crawled under. So a tump line is used by the Pygmies—a strip of bark a few inches wide, wound around the bundle and passed over the head. The women support this tump line by the forehead, sometimes easing the strain with their hands, but always with the head down, stooping to take more of the load on the back. The men, if they have to carry a load, generally let the tump line lie across the chest and over each shoulder, just to be different from the women.

I went over to where a group of men were drinking *liho*, a brew of forest berries and nuts and herbs, bitter, but warm and stimulating. They suggested that I should go on ahead with Kenge and a couple of other youths. The women would take all day to get there anyway, they said, even though some had already left. They would stop on the way and collect mushrooms and roots for the evening meal.

Only Ekianga sat silent, outside his hut, watching his third and youngest wife, Kamaikan, cooking his breakfast. He ignored his two

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

the molimo had begun, and we were in a camp much closer to the 361
village than we had been at Apa Lelo . . . Only about two hours'
walk away. Cephu, as usual, had his camp at a distance, but rather
farther removed than usual, and we saw less of him than ever. The
next morning we found that he had abandoned his camp the night
before and gone to join a hunting group farther to the west; he
wanted no part of returning to the village.

Even the children were depressed and sat around in silent little 857
groups fitfully playing with spinning tops made from slices of forest 152
nuts. Every now and again one of them got in the way of an adult
and was severely smacked. His cries brought only a sterner cuffing,
and by nightfall the camp was filled with wailing children and bad-
tempered adults. Only the youths seemed cheerful. For them the 883
village meant tobacco, palm wine, the wild erotic dancing the Pyg- 177
mies love to perform for the villagers, and a relaxation from the 152
tensions of the forest. They would no longer be hunting, so they
would be free from the restrictions that way of life imposed. They
would no longer be in the forest, so they would be free from its ever-
present authority. If the villagers thought the BaMbuti then came
under their authority, that was their mistake.

While the youths dreamed of the fun they were going to have, 883
particularly with the girls in the elima house, all the adults were 177
silent. Kenge, who although he was older still liked to associate 521
with the youths, stood boastfully in the middle of a group of admirers 273
and talked of all the village girls he was going to sleep with. And [836]
not only one a night, but two, three, perhaps even thirty. "And I
am going to drink palm wine until there is no more to drink. I am
going to steal all the palm wine there is in the village and drink it
all myself, to make me strong. But I won't get drunk, so when they
come to me and say, 'Kenge, why have you drunken all our palm
wine?' I shall just say, 'You committer of incest' "—Kenge had a
very descriptive word for this—" 'if I had drunk all your palm wine

THE FOREST PEOPLE

883
177
52
[273] would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and buy themselves beer."

"And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

554
52
[52] Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

[765] 765 This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

765 The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been.
533 The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it
[535] with love. When some of the youngsters began to dance Moke shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-